

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DLOS-05 OFA-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SAJ-01 INT-05 IO-10 OPIC-06 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00

ACDA-10 OES-05 AF-06 ARA-10 /123 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2314

INFO USIA WASHDC

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

DIA WASHDC

CINCLANT NORFOLK VA

UNCLAS LISBON 1813

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: DENIAL OF USSR FISHING BASE ON MADEIRA

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN LISBON WEEKLY
NEWSPAPER EXPRESSO MARCH 29:

BEGIN TEXT: HEADLINE: SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FISHERIES DENIES
RUSSIAN FISHING BASE ON MADEIRA. RESPONDING TO PERSISTENT
RUMORS ECHOED BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS LATELY, AUTHORITIES FROM
THE STATE SECRETARIAT OF FISHERIES FORMALLY DENIED ANY FOUNDATION
TO SUCH STORIES IN A DECLARATION TO EXPRESSO: "THERE IS NOT NOW,
NOR HAVE THERE BEEN ANY PROJECTS IN THIS RESPECT. IN RECENT
CONVERSATIONS IN MOSCOW BETWEEN THE STATE SECRETARY FOR
PORTUGUESE FISHERIES, DR. MARIO RUIVO, AND SOVIET MINISTER ISHKOV
THAT PROBABILITY WAS NOT EVEN RAISED. THE MISUNDERSTANDING AND
ITS EXPLOITATION BY SOME ORGANS OF INFORMATION HAVE NO BASIS
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WHATSOEVER. IT IS ONLY GRATUITOUS SPECULATION."

INDEED, LATELY (ESPECIALLY TOWARD THE END OF THE NATO SHIP VISIT TO PORTUGAL AT THE END OF JANUARY) PEOPLE BEGAN TO TALK CONTINUOUSLY ABOUT THE INSTALLATION OF A RUSSIAN FISHING BASE IN PORTUGAL. LATER, THEY ADDED THAT THE BASE WOULD BE LOCATED ON THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA. CONFUSION MIGHT APPARENTLY COME FROM THE FACT THAT MERCHANT SHIPS AND SOVIET FISHING VESSELS WERE AUTHORIZED TO REFUEL AT THE PORT OF FUNCHAL. BUT THAT CONFUSION, ACCORDING TO WELL INFORMED SOURCES, MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN INNOCENTLY INVENTED, BUT RATHER WAS A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO PROVOKE A CLIMATE OF POLITICAL TENSION. THUS WE KNOW THAT AFTER THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY--AND ESPECIALLY AFTER THE VISIT OF DR. MARIO RUIVO TO MOSCOW WAS ANNOUNCED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MONTH--THE FOREIGN PRESS INSISTENTLY CONTACTED PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO MAKE INQUIRIES REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF A RUSSIAN BASE IN OUR COUNTRY. AN ITALIAN AGENCY, ANSA, WHICH IS LINKED WITH THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY, EVEN INQUIRED IF THAT BASE WOULD BE MILITARY IN NATURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS EVEN SAID IN SOME CIRCLES THAT WHAT WAS SOUGHT WAS TO CREATE AN UNFAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR A VISIT TO LISBON OF THE SOVIET FISHING MINISTER, WHO WAS RETURNING FROM PERU. IN ANY CASE, THAT TRIP DID NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FISHERIES--WHO IN THE MEANWHILE HAD BEEN INVITED OFFICIALLY TO VISIT MOSCOW--WENT TO THE SOVIET CAPITAL IN THE BEGINNING OF MARCH WHERE AN AGREEMENT WAS SET FORTH ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE AGREEMENT INCLUDES VARIOUS TYPES OF COOPERATION, SPECIFICALLY WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET AID IN TRAINING PORTUGUESE TECHNICIANS AND FURNISHING EQUIPMENT FOR FISHING SCHOOLS IN OUR COUNTRY. NO MENTION IS MADE, NOT EVEN IN HYPOTHETICAL TERMS, OF THE POSSIBLE CREATION OF A RUSSIAN FISHING BASE IN PORTUGAL.

RUSSIAN FISHING BASES IN SPAIN - CANADA (SUB-HEAD)

IN ANY CASE, SOME HOLDERS OF OPINION BELIEVE THAT A CLIMATE OF INTIMIDATION AND SUSPICION WAS IN THE MAKING. THE ROLE OF NEWS AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY AMERICAN ONES, AND OTHER SECTORS MIGHT BE RELEVANT HERE, OPINION-MAKERS EMPHASIZE. THE VISIT OF DR. MARIO RUIVO TO MOSCOW WAS NOT WELL RECEIVED BY THESE SECTORS FOR WHOM SPECULATION REGARDING THE FISHING BASE WAS NOT DUE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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CHANCE OR MERE CONFUSION. IN ANY CASE, ACCORDING TO THESE OPINION-MAKERS, AT THE SAME TIME THAT THERE WAS SPECULATION ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP A RUSSIAN FISHING BASE IN PORTUGAL--AND ASCRIBING TO THIS A CERTAIN POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE--IT WAS FORGOTTEN THAT BASES OF THIS TYPE EXIST IN COUNTRIES LIKE CANADA AND SPAIN. AS FOR THE LATTER, A MIXED SOVIET-SPANISH COMPANY--"SOVHISPAN"--WHICH ENCOMPASSES SOVIET AND SPANISH COOPERATION IN THIS FIELD DOES EXIST. IN ADDITION, IT IS KNOWN

THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE A FISHING SUPPORT BASE IN LAS PALMAS IN THE CANARY ISLANDS.

NATO LISTENING APPARATUS IN THE AZORES (SUB-HEAD)

THE EXPLANATION GIVEN BY THESE SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE CURRENT AND PERSISTENT SPECULATIONS REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF A SOVIET FISHING BASE (AND EVEN A MILITARY BASE) IN OUR COUNTRY IS THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO CREATE A CLIMATE OF CONFUSION, SIMILAR TO WHAT HAPPENED IN OTHER COUNTRIES THAT WENT THROUGH OR ARE NOW GOING THROUGH POLITICAL CHANGES SIMILAR TO THOSE IN PORTUGAL. SPECIFICALLY, THESE WOULD BE CHILE DURING THE TIME OF ALLENDE, PERU AND CUBA, AMONG OTHERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SAME CIRCLES FIND IT STRANGE THAT THERE IS SILENCE REGARDING NATO'S LISTENING APPARATUS ON THE ISLAND OF SANTA MARIA IN THE AZORES, WHICH ALLOWS NATO TO MONITOR THE PASSAGE OF SUBMARINES IN THAT ZONE OF THE ATLANTIC. LATELY, MUCH HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE IDEA OF RECONVERTING THAT UNIT IN ORDER TO USE IT EXCLUSIVELY FOR SCIENTIFIC ENDS, SUCH AS LOCATING SCHOOLS OF FISH. THIS COULD END UP BENEFITING THE FISHING INDUSTRY. BUT, THERE ARE THOSE WHO MAINTAIN THAT THIS IDEA OF CONVERTING THE APPARATUS IS LACKING IN TECHNICAL VIABILITY. END TEXT.

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